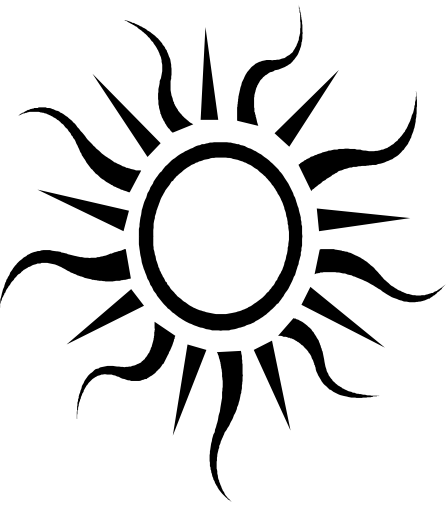


Department of Human Services

Prepared by the
DHS Office of
Communications
(517) 373-7394



*Important story at this spot

Articles in Today's Clips Friday, September 15, 2006

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
*Child Abuse/Neglect/Protection	2-22
*Audit	23-26
Welfare Reform	27-28
Juvenile Justice	29
Homelessness	30
Energy Assistance	31
Children's Rights	32-33
Adoption	34-35
Racial Disparity	36-37

Jury chosen to hear trial for Ricky's mother

BY JACK KRESNAK

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

September 15, 2006

LANSING -- After four days, a jury of 11 men and five women was chosen Thursday to decide the fate of Lisa Holland.

Holland, 33, is charged with first-degree murder and first-degree child abuse in the July 2005 killing of her 7-year-old son Ricky in the family home near Williamston.

Holland's husband, Tim Holland, 37, pleaded guilty to second-degree murder last week in connection with Ricky's death and will be called to testify against his wife during the trial, which is expected to last four to six weeks.

The Hollands adopted Ricky after he was placed in their state-licensed foster home.

The 16-person jury, including four alternates, was selected from a pool of 235 prospective jurors.

Defense attorneys used all 12 of their peremptory challenges to excuse potential jurors.

"I think we took painstaking efforts to empanel a fair and impartial jury," Ingham County Circuit Judge Paula Manderfield said Thursday.

She denied a defense motion to change the trial venue and excused the jurors until 8:45 a.m. Monday, when opening statements are scheduled to begin.

Copyright © 2006 Detroit Free Press Inc.

Published September 15, 2006
[From the Lansing State Journal]

Local news briefs

Jurors selected for trial of Lisa Holland

Eleven men and five women have been chosen to decide Lisa Holland's fate, starting Monday when opening arguments in her trial are set to begin. Jury selection ended Thursday with the 16 citizens - 12 jurors and four alternates - being sworn in.

Ingham County Circuit Judge Paula Manderfield warned jurors to avoid media coverage about the case, saying she didn't want to sequester them. Holland is charged with murder in the death of her 7-year-old adopted son, Ricky. Her husband, Tim Holland, has pleaded guilty to second-degree murder.

Lisa Holland's co-counsel Mike Nichols said he was satisfied with the jury selection. "Everyone worked hard to come up with a fair process," he said.

He said Holland's defense team could be entitled to a change of venue, because about half of an initial pool of 235 jurors were dismissed - either for being tainted by media coverage or other factors. That issue could be raised Monday.

- From staff writer Kevin Grasha

[<<Back](#)

LOCAL NEWS FIRST • LOCAL NEWS FIRST • LOCAL NEWS FIRST • LOCAL NEWS FIRST

Jury Selection Complete for Holland Murder Trial

Sep 15, 2006 06:37 AM EDT



11 men and 5 women have now been chosen to hear the case against a Williamson mother charged with murdering her son. After four intense days of questioning and hundreds of potential jurors, a jury is now in place to decide the fate of Lisa Holland.

The Williamson woman is accused of murdering her seven-year-old son, Ricky, 14 months ago. The pool of 235 is now down to just 16 men and women, 12 jurors and 4 alternates.

Here's how they break down- there are 11 men and 5 women. The judge will not release the exact ages of the jurors, but it's clear they span several decades. Now it's up to this group to decide whether or not Lisa Holland is guilty of murdering her son Ricky.

Lisa Holland was present in court as her attorneys and the prosecutor questioned dozens of jurors. Several jurors were let go for cause as the judge ruled for one reason or another they were not qualified to serve on this case, while others were dismissed by challenges from the attorneys, but just before 6pm Thursday, both sides agreed on the final 16.

Because of the publicity surrounding the case, Lisa's defense team had initially pushed for a change of venue, saying it would be difficult to find an impartial jury in Ingham County, but both sides now say they are satisfied with the outcome.

Andrew Abood, Lisa Holland's Defense Attorney: "I think we worked very hard, and given all the circumstances, I think we got the best jury we could possibly get."

Michael Ferency, Prosecuting Attorney: "There is no perfect panel, and what I saw was a group of people with life experience, and a group of people who seemed to respect the opinions of others, and you couldn't ask for a better panel than that."

Before the jury was allowed to leave, the judge gave them strict instructions not to discuss the case with anyone, watch any television coverage of the trial, or read any newspapers. They're to report back to the courthouse Monday morning at 8:45 for opening arguments.

You'll remember, back in July of 2005, Ricky Holland was reported missing from his Williamson home by his parents. Hundreds of volunteers searched for 8 days. One year ago, police searched the

Holland property. On January 26th, the break in the case- Lisa Holland arrested for domestic assault. One day later, her husband Tim leads police to Ricky's body. In February, both are charged with open murder. Then last week, Tim plead guilty to second degree murder, and now has to testify against his wife Lisa. Opening statements in Lisa's trial set to begin on Monday.



All content © Copyright 2000 - 2006 WorldNow and WLNS. All Rights Reserved.
For more information on this site, please read our [Privacy Policy](#) and [Terms of Service](#).



This is a printer friendly version of an article from **Lansing State Journal**. To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

Published September 15, 2006

Stepdad to be tried in child's death

13-month-old had 5 broken ribs, damage to her liver and spleen

By Kevin Grasha
Lansing State Journal

When paramedics carried 13-month-old Anishia Moy's lifeless body into Sparrow Hospital's emergency room Aug. 2, she had five broken ribs, dozens of bruises and severe damage to her liver and spleen.

On Thursday, the child's stepfather, 39-year-old Steven Lee Moy, was ordered to stand trial in her death.

The Lansing man, who is charged with murder and first-degree child abuse, could face life in prison if convicted.

Anishia died from internal injuries caused by blunt force trauma and possibly suffocation, said Dr. Brian Hunter, who performed the autopsy.

But Steven Moy's attorney said someone else is responsible for the child's injuries.

Anishia's mother, 21-year-old Loretta Moy, testified Thursday at a preliminary hearing in Lansing District Court that Anishia showed no signs of bruising in the days before she died, despite Hunter's testimony the child had injuries that were days or even weeks old.

"Someone is not telling the truth here," Steven Moy's attorney Roderick Porter said. "She had a series of injuries that are too old for him to have inflicted on that particular day."

Hunter's autopsy revealed about 30 bruises in various stages of healing.

"I would interpret them as abusive injuries," Hunter told Assistant Prosecutor Bill Crino, adding that he found broken bones in the child's forearm that also showed signs of healing.



(Photo by Courtesy photo)
Young victim: Anishia Ilene Angelina Moy shown in July 2006 photo.

What's next

- Steven Lee Moy will stand trial in the death of his 13-month-old stepdaughter. The 39-year-old Lansing man is charged with murder and child abuse. He could face life in prison if convicted.

He classified most of the other injuries, including five deep bruises on Anishia's scalp, as occurring around the time of death.

Hunter also said the child may have been suffocated, likely by having a hand placed over her nose and mouth.

Skin attaching her upper lip to her gum was torn, he said.

The day Anishia died, the Moys were living at a friend's two-bedroom house on Pontiac Street in Lansing. Loretta Moy testified that sometime between 12:30 p.m. and 1 p.m., she left Anishia alone in her husband's care, while she and two friends went to a laundromat.

Also that morning, a social worker visited the house to work with Anishia, who was having difficulty learning to crawl, Loretta testified.

Loretta said when she returned at about 5 p.m. and Steven handed Anishia to her, "She was ice cold, and she was not breathing."

Loretta testified her friend attempted to perform CPR, while Loretta received instructions over the phone from a 911 operator.

At the hospital, Loretta said her husband claimed the child fell off a couch.

The emergency room's attending physician also testified that Steven Moy said the child fell off a couch. Dr. David Castle said Moy told him he found her that afternoon facedown on the floor, turned her over and attempted CPR.

But Steven Moy told another doctor the child had fallen off a couch about 24 hours earlier, Castle said.

"The father gave conflicting statements," Castle said.

Porter said his client has always maintained his innocence.

The Moys married in January 2005, a few months after meeting at a homeless shelter, while Loretta was pregnant with Anishia. Loretta is now pregnant with Steven's child.

Contact Kevin Grasha at 267-1347 or kgrasha@lsj.com.

Copyright 2006 Lansing State Journal Use of this site signifies your agreement to the Terms of Service (updated 12.20.02)

[\[Back\]](#)



FRIDAY
September 15,
2006

Weather for Cadillac
Partly Sunny
Time: 1:30 pm
Temp: 72
RealFeel Temp: 76
Humidity: 60
Winds: S at 6 mph
[Click for 5-day forecast!](#)
powered by AccuWeather.com

- [Home](#)
- [News](#)
- [Sports](#)
- [Classifieds](#)
- [Obituaries](#)
- [Archives](#)
- [Community](#)
- [Special Sections](#)
- [Online Forms](#)
- [Contact Info](#)
- [Weather](#)

[Police continue to investigate murder](#)

LAKE CITY - The investigation into the death of 7-year-old Alyssa Paige Musselman is continuing.

The Missaukee County Sheriff's Department said there was no new information Thursday. A post-mortem examination was scheduled Thursday to help police pinpoint the time of death.

Statements from Amy Musselman, the victim's mother, led police to believe she shot and killed her daughter before shooting herself. She was listed in stable condition at Munson Medical Center in Traverse City following the incident.

Sheriff Jim Bosscher said with the investigation still underway he cannot speculate if and when charges will be filed against Amy Musselman. The case is being investigated as a murder and attempted suicide.

news@cadillacnews.com | 775-NEWS (6397)

[Email this story](#)

[Submit your opinion](#)

[Print this story](#)



Copyright © 2006 Cadillac News. All Rights Reserved
130 N. Mitchell St., P.O. Box 640, Cadillac, Michigan 49601-0640
Phone: 231-775-6565 Fax: 231-775-8790
E-Mail: customerservice@cadillacnews.com

Besander pleads to manslaughter in infant's death



BESANDER

By **STEVE BROWNLEE**, Journal Staff Writer

MARQUETTE — A 20-year-old Ishpeming woman plead guilty to manslaughter this week for the suffocation death of her infant son more than a year ago.

Aimee Rose Besander pleaded guilty Wednesday to one count of manslaughter in 25th Circuit Court in Marquette, according to court documents filed with the Marquette County Clerk's office.

Besander, who has been living in Champion with her grandfather, Lowell Besander Sr., for more than a year, faces a maximum 15-year prison sentence and \$7,500 fine, the documents state.

As part of the plea agreement, an open murder charge that carries a possible life sentence was dropped by the Marquette County Prosecutor's Office. Besander was scheduled to go on trial Oct. 20 on the murder charge.

Besander's sentencing by Circuit Judge John R. Weber is scheduled for noon on Sept. 25, in the Marquette court, according to the Marquette County Prosecutor Gary Walker.

Walker indicated there are other terms to the plea agreement, but did not want to divulge their nature until after sentencing is completed.

The case stems from the death of Besander's 31/2-month-old son, Jacob Joseph Schilling, on April 16, 2005, at their Ishpeming residence.

An autopsy conducted in downstate Kent County indicated the boy's death was a homicide, concluding that he died by asphyxiation through suffocation, according to the Ishpeming Police Department.

Besander's defense team, led by Marquette attorney Thomas Casselman, accepted the manslaughter plea this week after the court granted its request for a special hearing that determines what the probable sentence would be if the defense and the court accept the plea agreement.

Documents from the Sept. 8 hearing, called a declaratory or Cobb hearing, indicated that

Besander's probable sentence would range from 57 months — just under five years — to 15 years, the statutory maximum.

Besander has been allowed to live with her grandfather since an arrangement was approved by District Judge Dennis Girard in June 2005. For nearly two months prior to that, she had been lodged in the Marquette County Jail.

Conditions set by Girard included Besander only being allowed to leave her grandfather's house for conferences with her attorneys or mental health counseling sessions.

[Return to regular web page](#)



This is a printer friendly version of an article from **The Detroit News**
To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

September 15, 2006

Canton neighbors defend mom of 9

Christine Ferretti / The Detroit News

CANTON TOWNSHIP -- Wayne County prosecutors are expected to file charges today against a mother who left her nine children alone in the middle of the night, even as neighbors are rushing to the woman's defense.

The family, who moved into a duplex in the 42000 block of Barchester a few months ago, is pleasant and respectable, neighbors say. Police said the 34-year-old woman has no criminal record or allegations of neglect.

"The kids are very polite, and they really look out for each other," said Karen Knight, 46, who talks with the children who regularly ride bikes on the street and play with her dog Cozmo.

"I feel really bad for those kids. There are a lot of them, and they probably won't be in the same foster home. That's sad," she said.

State child workers took into custody the woman's children -- ages 9 months to 13 years old -- after she returned Wednesday morning. Police said she claimed she went to a house on the east side of Detroit and was stranded.

Neighbors said she doesn't own a car.

"Whether she is right or wrong, she is their mother and her heart is probably hurting right now," Knight said.

Canton police said they received a call about 8 a.m. Wednesday from a neighbor stating the kids were left alone overnight and were worried. She apparently left after putting the kids to bed, police said.

The children were questioned and taken to the Canton Police Department, where officials contacted state Children's Protective Services, Detective Tim Wright said.

"From everything I've seen, she's been a good mom and appears to love her kids," said Leslie Raiford, 48, a neighbor. "I don't think she would willfully hurt her kids."

The woman could face nine misdemeanor counts of contributing to the delinquency of minors, each punishable by 90 days in jail, police said. Maria Miller, spokeswoman for Prosecutor Kym Worthy, said charges are expected today but refused to comment further.

You can reach Christine Ferretti at (734) 462-2289 or cferretti@detnews.com.

[Return to regular web page](#)

ClickOnDetroit.com

Mom Jailed Because Of Son's Rotten Teeth

Woman Thought Teeth Would Just Fall Out

POSTED: 8:16 am EDT September 14, 2006

BETHLEHEM, Pa. -- A Pennsylvania mother is behind bars because, police said, her son's lack of dental care was her fault.

- **Survey:** Poor Dental Care: Abuse?

According to a local dentist, the 5-year-old boy has just eight teeth left and will need to be on a special soft food diet. The dentist said the child's tooth decay was so severe, it was criminal, and police agreed.

Dr. Nicholas Prusack said the nerves are exposed in several places.

"This is the X-ray showing the rotted teeth of the 5 year-old victim, and 12 of them so infected they had to be pulled," Prusack said.

Investigators said the damage was the result of the boy having never seen a dentist.

Now, his mother, 43-year-old Erneida Resto of Bethlehem, Pa., is charged with endangering her son's welfare.

Northampton County, Pa., children and youth services began investigating Resto in February when she took her son to a dental office in Salisbury Township, Pa.

That is where Prusack performed the surgery, saying the boy was in so much pain he could not eat.

"It is probably one of the worst cases," Prusack said.

Prusack was so concerned that he notified authorities, who said the boy had been complaining of headaches and pain in his mouth since the summer of 2005.

According to court documents, his mother said she knew her son was hurting, but did not take him to a dentist because she figured his baby teeth would fall out and the problem would fix itself.

Prusack said if he hadn't removed the boy's teeth he would likely have ended up in the hospital within six months.

He said the boy is now left with only six teeth on the bottom and two teeth on top and has a long road ahead.

"He's not going to have all of his permanent teeth, and for the next 10 years chewing food will be a problem for him," Prusack said.

Resto has been sent to Northampton County Prison under \$25,000 bail. A preliminary hearing was set for Sept. 22.

The boy is now in foster care, officials said.

RELATED TO STORY

[+ Enlarge](#)

An X-ray shows the damage to the child's teeth.

Distributed by Internet Broadcasting. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Baby poisoned after drinking formula mixed with bleach

By [PATRICK CENTER](#) WOOD-TV

HASTINGS -- Investigators in Hastings are trying to figure out how bleach got into a baby's bottle.

Barry County Dispatch received a frantic phone call from the child's mother Sept. 8. The woman told 24 Hour News 8 she was not involved in the incident.

The Hastings Police Department is now investigating that 911 call made by Jennifer Clement.

Dispatch: "What's your emergency?"

Clement: "I need an ambulance."

Dispatch: "Where you at?"

Clement: "429 West Mills Street."

Dispatch: "What's going on?"

Clement: "My 3-year-old-son just gave my 7-month-old daughter bleach."

Clement told Barry County dispatchers that her infant daughter, Belle, had ingested baby formula mixed with Clorox bleach.

Police then arrived at the Clements' house.

"Several officers got there, obviously started asking questions," said Hastings Police Chief Jerry Sarver.

Sarver said one officer on the scene reported smelling bleach on the baby's breath.

"I should say the chemical analysis of the formula hasn't been established from the crime lab yet," Sarver said. "But according to the report, it's pretty obvious there's bleach in it. You could smell it in the formula."

"I made Belle the bottle," Clement said. "There was no bleach in it at all. I put formula and water in it. That was it."

Belle Clement was taken to Pennock Hospital. She has since been treated and released. She and her 3-year-old brother, Christopher, are now in the custody of Barry County Child Protective Services. Jennifer's husband was at work during the incident, and Jennifer said she stepped outside the house for a smoke when it happened. She said a

family friend was there.

Now, Jennifer said she is not so certain her son is to blame.

"If he did put that bleach in the bottle, I don't think he did it by himself," she said.

"That's kind of the way this investigation is headed right now," Chief Sarver said. "We do have an adult family member as a suspect."

The Clements said over the past two years Child Protective Services opened several cases involving the family. All but one case, they said, remain open.

So far, no charges have been filed in the case.

Teacher's sex trial opens

He's charged with assaulting boy, 5

BY L.L. BRASIER
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

September 15, 2006

A tiny 5-year-old, dressed in slacks and a blue sweater vest, told an Oakland County jury that an Oak Park kindergarten teacher forced him to perform oral sex and fondled him in a special ed classroom during a lunch recess in October.

The child, whose name is being withheld by the Detroit Free Press, testified as the first prosecution witness in the trial of James Perry, 31, charged with four counts of criminal sexual conduct. Perry has taught for 10 years and has no prior criminal record.

Oak Park police say a second child was also assaulted, and he is also expected to testify.

Most of the prosecutor's case rests on statements the two boys, then ages 4 and 5, have made to family and investigators and what they testified to at an earlier preliminary exam. Many of the statements, though, appear contradictory about what happened and how.

Assistant Prosecutor Andrea Dean said in her opening statement that some of the contradictions were because the boys were frightened, and she urged jurors to remember what it was like to be a child.

"He wasn't ready to say what happened," she said of the 4-year-old boy, who repeatedly denied the assault to investigators in the beginning. Sexual assault on a child, she said, "is a process, not an event."

But defense attorney Ray Correll said the boys' stories were too contradictory and far-fetched to be believed. And he plans to present a teacher who will say that the room where the boys say the assault took place was occupied at the time by other teachers and students.

"That's part of the impossibility of this case," Correll said. On Thursday, the 5-year-old testified that Perry pulled him from a line of students in a hallway and forced the sex. But much of his testimony seemed to contradict what he said in earlier hearings -- in which he said he was assaulted at the same time as the other boy.

And he said he did not recall telling investigators that Perry had never touched him.

Contact **L.L. BRASIER** at 248-858-2262 or brasier@freepress.com.

Copyright © 2006 Detroit Free Press Inc.



www.record-eagle.com

09/15/2006

News in brief

Man jailed after sexual assault

FROM STAFF REPORTS

CHEBOYGAN — A Cheboygan man is behind bars for allegedly sexually assaulting four minor children over a two-year period.

Authorities in Cheboygan County arrested Allen John Fenn, 30, at his home in Aloha Township on an 18-count warrant for the alleged sexual assaults. An investigation into Fenn's activities was launched last year.

He is charged with various degrees of criminal sexual conduct, accosting children for immoral purposes and indecent exposure. He faces life in prison, if convicted of the charges.

Fenn is currently held at the Cheboygan County Jail on a \$250,000 bond.

Copyright 1998-2005 Traverse City Record-Eagle



www.record-eagle.com

09/15/2006

News in brief

Man charged with sexual assault

FROM STAFF REPORTS

TRAVERSE CITY — A 56-year-old Fife Lake man faces sexual assault charges after allegedly inappropriately touching a child.

Lawrence D. Gerred is charged with two counts of second-degree criminal sexual conduct with a person under 13 years old.

The girl told police that the two incidents occurred in June 1998 during visits to Gerred's home.

Copyright 1998-2005 Traverse City Record-Eagle

This is a printer friendly version of an article from **hometownlife.com**
To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

[Back](#)

Article published Sep 14, 2006

Westland man faces hearing in child pornography case

BY DARRELL CLEM
STAFF WRITER

A Westland man has been charged with downloading child pornographic images of prepubescent girls from his laptop computer.

John Kevin Spry, 50, was arraigned Saturday after police earlier raided his home on Glen, near Wayne Road, and found numerous child porn images that he had burned onto CDs, police Sgt. Debra Mathews said.

Spry, a single man employed as an electrician, was charged with one count of child sexually abusive activity, three counts of having child sexually abusive material and one count of marijuana possession.

He was arraigned by Westland 18th District Magistrate Donald Vandersloot and jailed on a \$100,00 0/10 percent bond, meaning he would have to post \$10,000 for his release.

Vandersloot entered a not-guilty plea for Spry and ordered him back in court Sept. 21 for a preliminary hearing that will determine whether he should stand trial in Wayne County Circuit Court.

If convicted, the defendant could face penalties ranging up to 20 years in prison, Mathews said.

Police received an undisclosed tip that Spry had child porn on his laptop computer, but he wasn't at home when officers went to his house earlier this month, Mathews said.

Officers rammed the door of Spry's home, went inside and seized alleged evidence against him, Mathews said. The suspect called police when he returned and found that his home had been broken into, she said.

"Officers went out and put him under arrest," she said.

Spry's case is only the latest of several this year in which Westland police have made arrests involving child pornography or abuse.

This is a printer friendly version of an article from **hometownlife.com**
To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

[Back](#)

Article published Sep 14, 2006

Exchange Club seeking help in its fight against child abuse

BY CAROL MARSHALL
STAFF WRITER

After becoming a mother, Aniko Martin paid attention to news in a different way. Suddenly, stories about child abuse took on new, more troublesome, importance to her.

"I had to do something about it," she said.

So she found herself at a Canton Exchange Club meeting, where she and other members engaged themselves in projects to raise money and awareness to fight child abuse.

"Because I was a stay at home mom, I first got involved because I needed a social activity, and I was concerned about child abuse," she said. "But the more involved I got, the more I learned how big the problem is. Doing something about it helps me feel more hopeful."

The Canton Exchange Club is inviting others to get involved as well. The club will host an open house later this month.

The club has focused on its largest fund-raiser, the Blue Ribbon Campaign, in hopes of opening a child abuse prevention center in western Wayne County.

The center would provide resources for parents at-risk of harming their children.

In order to move forward on the center opening, the club needs more people to get active, Martin said.

"Right now we only have about a dozen core members, but I know that there must be more people out there who care," she said. "It's frustrating because a lot of people might care, but do nothing because everyone always thinks that someone else is taking care of the problem. But they're not."

Volunteering is based on individual interest and ability.

"My first year I only volunteered maybe four hours all year," she said. "Now I want to do more, but I don't have to if I don't want to."

"There's something for everyone in this club," she said. "I challenge everybody to do something. It may not seem like much but something is better than nothing."

The Canton Exchange open house will be 6:30 - 8 p.m. Sept. 26 at Bailey's Pub & Grille, 1777 Canton Center North. The club is running a special for new members, and will excuse membership dues for the first three months.

For more information about Exchange Club of Canton, call (734) 207-8943 or e-mail Dave Loveland at dbloveland@sbcglobal.net.

Care House to celebrate renovations

County group aids abused children

BY STAN DONALDSON

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

September 15, 2006

A Mt. Clemens-based outreach group that helps abused children and their families will mark its 10th anniversary this weekend and honor several businesses and organizations that helped provide \$250,000 in renovations to its building.

The group, Care House, provides forensic interviews, treatment services and counseling to children 12 and younger who have been sexually or physically abused in Macomb County, said Nancy Skula, the group's director.

Today, law enforcement officials, community leaders and businesses that volunteered resources to renovate the two-story home, as well as some of the children and families who have stayed there, will get a chance to tour the renovated home.

Families who have used its outreach services will be invited for a celebration Saturday.

The renovations, which started in 2005, include a new parking lot, additional offices, window treatments, a roof, doors, carpeting and painting. The designs to renovate the building were created by Baker College students in Clinton Township who participated in a design competition.

"We wouldn't be here without the community and the people who support us," Skula said.

Care House started as a pilot program by the Macomb County Child Abuse and Neglect Information Council in 1996 and evolved after the initial three-month program received a positive response from the community.

Since the group started, Skula said, it has helped 4,500 families and has coordinated 2,500 forensic interviews for children who have been abused.

Lynnette Zaner, director of design at Baker College, said Care House is important to the county, and school officials were glad to donate money and resources toward the project.

"It is a wonderful cause," Zaner said.

Though the group is pleased the outreach seems effective, Skula said child abuse is still a problem.

In Macomb County, she said, the Department of Human Services investigated 6,228 physical or sexual abuse cases involving children during the 2004-2005 fiscal year.

"When there are stresses in the family, economic or domestic, children are the most vulnerable," Skula said.

Contact **STAN DONALDSON** at 248-351-3691 or sdonaldson@freepress.com.

Copyright © 2006 Detroit Free Press Inc.

Not Vote On Child Ombudsman Bill

MIRS, Thursday, September 14, 2006

The House did not bring up HB 6440 today. The legislation, sponsored by Rep. David [LAW] (R-Commerce Twp.), would move the state's children's ombudsman office from the executive branch to the legislative branch.

The bill came out of committee yesterday, and sources told MIRS the plan was for the full House to take it up today, but that didn't happen. The latest on the bill is that House GOP leadership plans to move it next week.

Panel Grills DHS Over Audit

MIRS, Thursday, September 14, 2006

Today, a House joint subcommittee questioned Department of Human Services (DHS) Spokesman James **NYE** about a recent audit that shows DHS has overpaid welfare recipients millions of dollars each year.

According to the audit, which was released the Michigan Auditor General's office on Aug. 16, DHS overpaid welfare recipients \$25.5 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2003 because officials weren't able to double-check recipients' wage earnings on time (See "[Fact-Checking Disconnect Means \\$25M In Welfare Overpayments](#)," 8/16/06).

But basically under questioning today by the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Fiscal Oversight, Audit and Litigation and the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Department of Human Service, Nye argued that DHS has been taking steps to rectify the situation.

Nye repeatedly stated that the DHS didn't have its new Bridges computer system, its new reading review program, its find-and-fix program and it had not started to reorganized aspects of the department regionally. All of these things DHS has either put in place or started to put into place since the time period the audit covered, which was from 2003 to the summer of 2004.

Rep. Chris [KOLB](#) (D-Ann Arbor) made the case for the department.

"For six years this department has had to be learning to do more with less and less employees," Kolb said. "And during the period this audit covered, it was having to do that without an adequate computer system."

"If you ever watched them add a new client under that system, even a new infant, you had to go through about six different screens," Kolb said. "It's a job that should take about five seconds that ends up taking about 25 minutes. But now I'm looking forward to department having the Bridges computer system."

But Subcommittee Chair Bruce [CASWELL](#) (R-Hillsdale) said he thinks a lot of the department's administrative structure is overdo — in other words DHS should privatize most of its recordkeeping and monitoring requirements, the way private businesses and some other departments have done.

"I'd like to tell you, I don't blame the workers at DHS," Caswell said. "These are social workers who hired in to help the people, not be bookkeepers. Other departments have turned to the private sector with successful results."

"If I came out of college with a degree as a social worker and then I was told my job was to fill out these document and do these mundane jobs, I think I'd wonder why," Caswell continued. "I don't think under those conditions people trained as social workers could keep up much interest in it — and I don't blame them."

The gist of Caswell's comments were to the point that a good deal of the problems identified in the audit pertained to a lack of follow-through in regard to paper-trails and documentation. Caswell also said that two years ago the Legislature directed the DHS to use private firms for its paperwork tasks, but the department seems to be resisting the change.

"I think you need a new administrative model," Caswell said. "I don't think it's working to have people doing jobs they weren't cut out to do."

But Nye defended having the tasks performed "in-house."

"We have recoupment specialists working in these areas," Nye said. "They honestly hired in with us because they wanted to do this work."

But Caswell argued that a few years back the Department of Community Health (DCH) switched to using an "outside" firm to track clients and make sure kids who were eligible for health care through their parents insurance

coverage weren't on Medicaid roles, and it paid dividends for taxpayers.

"That saved about \$24 million right away," Caswell said. "And the Department of Treasury now uses a private company, too, and they've been successful with that."

Nye explained that under the DHS rules, when a client's getting a job, but isn't fully informing the department about the change, it results in he or she getting overcompensated in state benefits, the error is at first attributed to the client. However, if the department doesn't make the appropriate correction within 15 days, it officially becomes the department's error.

Basically, if the overpayment is to someone who remains on the welfare roles, DHS will try to rectify it through lower future payments. If the error results in the client (who goes off of assistance) getting an overpayment of \$150 or less, the state doesn't pursue the issue. If the overpayment is between \$150 and \$500 to a client no longer on the roles the department will try to rectify the error by getting the money back from the client but won't take the case to court.

But for overpayments of \$500 or more, the DHS will pursue the matter in court if necessary. The threshold for going to court was recently dropped to \$500 from \$1,000, because the newer systems supposedly do a better job of tracking the overpayments.

Rep. Jerry [KOOIMAN](#) (R-Grand Rapids) echoed Caswell's statements and then said he had come into possession of a communication to local DHS offices, telling workers to no longer pursue background on clients with follow-up questions.

"I've come across a new directive telling workers not to do follow up questions after they get verification of income," Kooiman said. "My understanding has been that the best way to find out about overpayments is through follow-up questions. But now we have this directive that says not to do the follow-up questions."

Nye said the directive was the result of federal policy.

"That directive came about as a result of guidelines in the Federal Quality Assistance handbook," Nye said. "It says you should not require them to ask questions beyond the verification of income."

Michigan Report

September 14, 2006

WITH AUDIT, CASWELL ASKS D.H.S. TO CONSIDER SOME PRIVATE SERVICES

After going over an [audit](#) on the state's recovery process for the overissuance of public assistance benefits before two House Appropriations subcommittee panels Thursday, [Rep. Bruce Caswell](#) (R-Hillsdale) urged the Department of Human Services to consider moving some administrative duties to the private sector.

Saying that the core issue was requiring social workers to do what he called "geek work," Mr. Caswell, chair of the Subcommittee on Fiscal Oversight, Audit and Litigation, said the Department of Treasury has contracted out similar administrative duties to the private sector for a variety of departments. He said DHS should stand up and realize it could also be benefiting.

"There's a constant refusal to do for your people the right thing, which is let them to be social workers," he said. "Last time I looked at a dollar bill it didn't have a Republican or a Democrat. This is about respecting the money that is being sent to us."

The audit concluded that while the department's efforts to recover overissuances was substantially complete, it did find occasions when DHS did not investigate and resolve differences of wages reported by employers and benefit recipients or that new employment reports were not conducted in a timely manner, therefore hurting the department's chances of recovering any money.

According to the audit, half of the new employment verification occurred 10 days after the required 15 day standard.

In its defense, Jim Nye, head of field operations for DHS, said the department can take away benefits from people still in the system if they were given more benefits than they deserved during a certain period, and that further computer updates have allowed local agencies to start the recovery process sooner. He also said that the threshold for collecting benefits given out in the department's error has been reduced from \$1,000 to \$500 to speed up recoveries.

The Office of Auditor General estimated that approximately \$96 million has been given out over the years in overissuances that the department has not recovered. Mr. Caswell said if the state had a better way of keeping track of reports than it also could be receiving upward of \$100 million in additional federal funds.

To the idea that social workers should do social work, Mr. Nye said that recovery specialists are hired to do record keeping and that with the computer program Bridges, the department believes its efforts will be more effective.

And during the audit review, [Rep. Chris Kolb](#) (D-Ann Arbor) questioned what the joint hearing with the Subcommittee on Human Services was even doing since the department had agreed to all but one of the auditor general's recommendations.

Mr. Kolb said lawmakers have cut the budget for the department and not allowed it to purchase updated computers until recently, so what was being seen in the audit was the result of those actions.

Republicans on the panels continued to ask the department to consider the private services because the administrative model still does not seem to be working.



Welfare regulations: Put 'em to work, or ...

Friday, September 15, 2006

Reduced to headlines, it may appear that the federal government is one hard-hearted Scrooge: States must put more welfare recipients to work, or they will be penalized millions of dollars. In reality, we see no problem with tying welfare money to success in job placement - if there are jobs. And that is a real question in Michigan, home of the "One State Recession."

Under new federal welfare reform rules that take effect next month, the states face a daunting task. They must get 50 percent of the single-parent households on welfare involved in work activities -- that is, jobs, job training, community service or other eligible activities. For two-parent households receiving assistance, the expectation is 90 percent.

More than two dozen states have a lot of work to do, or face penalties -- one of them being Michigan.

California must find work for about 60,000 people. In Pennsylvania, about 23,000 must be added to the work rolls.

Currently Michigan has 78,000 single- and two-parent families on welfare. To comply with the new rules, the state must get about 11,500 more people engaged in work-participation activities.

If Michigan fails to attain the 50/90 percent expectations, it could lose millions of dollars. For fiscal year 2007, the state is slated to receive \$775.4 million in a welfare block grant.

Here are two perspectives on this issue:

- We would be concerned if we believed the feds would jerk those dollars away for factors beyond Michigan's control. And the state economy falls into that category. The best efforts of Republican and Democratic administrations over the past decade have not changed one fact of life: Michigan remains vulnerable to cyclical and auto-related downturns in the economy. How can a state rightly be punished when it has lost 200,000 manufacturing jobs and is saddled with the highest unemployment figures in the nation?
- Yet there is also something to be said for the hard, but reasonable, line that the federal government has drawn. It is hard because it is unforgiving. Yet it is reasonable because the states have all seen this coming and had ample opportunity to ramp up their work-participation rates.

While Michigan may seem to be at risk of losing out, it is encouraging to note that Marianne Udow, director of the Department of Human Services, is upbeat. "We are very confident we are going to meet the goals," she said recently. "We have talked to HHS (Health and Human Services) and during the next fiscal year we expect to meet the 50 percent."

One reason she can afford to be optimistic is that federal regulations allow for a broad range of eligible "work participation" activities. Jobs are not the only way to meet the requirement. Other activities include on-the-job training, vocational training, even community service.

In the big picture, this is an area where the nation is making progress -- even in Michigan, with its long-term economic woes. Progress means limiting welfare or public assistance to those who truly need it, and helping as many of those as possible to become involved in productive work-related activities.

-- Jackson Citizen Patriot

Sunday: The Jackson "Legacy" and what it means



Handouts set bad example

FLINT JOURNAL LETTER TO THE EDITOR

FENTON

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Friday, September 15, 2006

JOURNAL READER

I agree "food stamp comments" ["Welfare Cadillac? Grocery store cashier says she's seen it all," If You Ask Me, Aug. 13, Page C4] are basically wrong. Most people are truly needy.

There are, however, many families being raised by two people who never marry so they can defraud the system. Men often live with the mother of their children so the woman can apply for government programs. Go to college if you want to go; don't make taxpayers pay for your children. Get a second job - or a first job - to support your family.

My father, with 10 people to support in our little house in Inkster, would have been ashamed to let anyone else raise his children. His work ethic and those of generations of men like his set examples for their children.

What example do handouts give to children? Where is your pride, your morality, your integrity, your responsibility?

Julie Zielinski

Fenton

©2006 Flint Journal

© 2006 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.

Published September 15, 2006
[From the Lansing State Journal]

Local news briefs

Highfields chief to meet public

ONONDAGA - Community members are invited to an open house Sunday to meet the new president and CEO of Highfields Inc.

John Evans of Williamston takes over the nonprofit organization for families and children on Oct. 1. His appointment was part of a major restructuring after problems last winter in the agency's residential program for boys with behavioral problems.

The Onondaga campus will be open from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. with speakers taking the podium at 3 p.m. The campus is at 5123 Old Plank Road, off of U.S. 127 and the Leslie exit.



Shelter proposal tabled

Friday, September 15, 2006

GREENVILLE -- A special-use permit is all that stands in the way of Hope Ministries opening a men's homeless shelter in Greenville, but city officials are hesitant to grant one. The Greenville Planning Commission voted Thursday to table discussion on the shelter until Sept. 28, to allow more time to study the impact the shelter could have on neighboring property values. Hope Ministries has proposed opening a rescue mission in the former Faith Baptist Church at 1015 E. Washington St. that would could feed and shelter up to 10 men.

©2006 Grand Rapids Press

© 2006 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.

Granholm Knocks Bush On Energy Aid

MIRS, Thursday, September 14, 2006

Gov. Jennifer [GRANHOLM](#) and Wisconsin Gov. Jim **DOYLE** sent a letter to President George W. **BUSH** asking him to reverse an "unfair, illogical decision by his administration to release \$80 million in energy assistance funding that excluded Midwestern states in favor of eastern states."

Apparently the money was released to 14 states "in which low-income households make greatest use of fuel oil to heat their homes," according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

This assistance excludes all states west of Pennsylvania, except Alaska. Granholm and Doyle argue that Midwestern states were excluded because they rely on natural gas rather than fuel oil.

Doyle and Granholm wrote this in their letter:

"Directing the vast majority of the funding to eastern states — including some with warmer climates and shorter winters than our states — while denying needed heating assistance to Midwestern states is completely inattentive to the needs of our struggling families. As families in the Midwest prepare for a long, cold winter with rising utility bills, the Bush Administration must put all existing dollars to use.

"Mr. President, therefore we strongly urge you to release the remaining \$22 million in federal heating assistance funds to Wisconsin, Michigan and other states that were deprived of the same considerations given to east coast states."

Both governors signed the letter. In a press release, Granholm said this about Bush's decision:

"Now that our drivers are finally getting some relief at the pump, I'm amazed that the Bush Administration would chose to ignore Midwesterners' home heating needs. This decision is just one more example of how out of touch the president is."

Hearing to discuss childrens' rights

Kerry Benjoe

The Leader-Post

Friday, September 15, 2006

The Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights is coming to Regina to discuss the issues facing adopted children, youth in the justice system and aboriginal children.

The hearings are being held Tuesday, when experts and witnesses can speak to the committee about its discussion of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Canada.

In 2004 the committee began looking into the rights of children. In November, after travelling east to the Maritime provinces the committee filed an interim report entitled, Who's in Charge Here? Effective Implementation of Canada's International Obligations.

The report recommends: Developing a more effective means of incorporating treaty obligations into law; having the federal government consider itself bound by the convention; establishing a federal children's commissioner; and establishing an interdepartmental working group for children's rights.

In Regina, the committee is to hear from five panels of experts on adoption, youth justice and aboriginal children. The hearings are open to the public and are set to start at 9 a.m. in the Quality Hotel at 1717 Victoria Ave.

Saskatchewan Children's Advocate Marvin Bernstein noted that all three issues overlap.

"There is a significant over-representation of aboriginal children in care and in custody," said Bernstein, noting that it's a chronic issue right across Canada.

Bernstein said he will be supporting the idea of a federal children's advocate. He said there is a need for a federal children's advocate because it's "important in terms of jurisdiction."

He said children are not being treated as people with rights. Children don't have equal access to justice, because they cannot obtain a lawyer to represent them in court proceedings even when the proceedings are about them.

In terms of adoption issues Bernstein said children should have the right to access to their birth information. Other adoption issues Bernstein is hoping to address is the need for permanency in regards to adoption and to respect a child's heritage as well as respect custom adoptions.

"The province has an obligation to support, uphold and implement the convention (on the rights of the child)," said the children's advocate.

Betty Ann Pottruff, executive director for policy planning and evaluation for Saskatchewan Justice, said she and her colleagues will talk about youth justice innovations and youth justice process.

"Most of our remarks will be addressing what it is we have done in the province in terms of youth justice," said Pottruff who added there has been money invested in programs to prevent youth from becoming involved in the justice system as victims or offenders.

"We do have a disproportionate number of aboriginal youth involved in the criminal

justice system both as victims and offenders. It's a pretty significant problem that requires an interdepartmental and interagency and community response," said Pottruff.

© The Leader-Post (Regina) 2006

CLOSE WINDOW

Copyright © 2006 CanWest Interactive, a division of CanWest MediaWorks Publications, Inc.. All rights reserved.



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING



MARIANNE UDOW
DIRECTOR

News Release

Contact: Maureen Sorbet (517) 373-7394

Michigan Heart Gallery on Display in Farmington Hills *Public to view professional portraits of Michigan foster children who are waiting for adoption*

September 15, 2006

FARMINGTON HILLS – There are more than 4,000 children in Michigan with parental rights terminated who are either waiting for their adoption to be finalized or waiting for a family. Most of these children are among those hardest to place – kids who are older and members of minorities and/or sibling groups. Adoption for older youth in the foster care system is a priority to ensure they do not leave the foster care system without a connection to a supportive adult.

Sixty of these children are featured in a heart-warming photographic exhibit called The Michigan Heart Gallery. The Michigan Heart Gallery will be on display from September 15 – October 14, 2006 at the JAM Gallery, 33212 Grand River Ave., in Farmington Hills.

A special opening reception will be held on Saturday, September 16, 2006 at 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. The public is invited to attend this event.

The Michigan Heart Gallery, a collaborative effort between the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange, the Adoptive Family Support Network and the Michigan Department of Human Services, seeks to bring our community closer to the faces and voices of children waiting for a “forever family.” The Michigan Heart Gallery features portraits of Michigan’s waiting children who come from various regions of the state and are representative of different races and ages.

“The Michigan Heart Gallery has been an amazing undertaking,” Kristen Donnay, intake coordinator for the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange, said. “The portraits of the children are compelling. They draw you in and make you feel like you know the child. Equally as impressive has been the time, energy and compassion that the photographers have brought to the project.”

Recruitment activities such as the Heart Gallery remind people that there are many children in Michigan who are waiting to be adopted.

“Most of the children featured have been waiting for a long time to find a family to call their own,” Marianne Udow, director of the Michigan Department of Human Services, said. “While we hope the children featured in The Heart Gallery will find families, the larger goal of The Heart Gallery is to promote the idea of caring for and adopting children from the foster care system. We know from experience that if these children are not seen, and if we do not continue to educate the public about older children who need families, then they are forgotten. We are thrilled that the public will have a chance to view these portraits, get to know the children and possibly take action to see if adoption may be right for them.”

-MORE-

The photographs in The Heart Gallery were taken by more than 50 professional photographers who donated their time, talent and resources to take portraits that help capture the spirit of children in the foster care system. The Heart Gallery allows these children to be seen in an artistic, poignant and tasteful photographic exhibit. The kids thoroughly enjoyed their photo shoot experience. Some children were able to help select which portrait to feature in The Heart Gallery, while others came up with their own poses and some were given lessons in photography during the photo shoot, allowing them to become budding photographers themselves. Professional photographer Andre LaRoche volunteered to participate in The Michigan Heart Gallery and photographed 11-year-old Anthony.

"After meeting Anthony and walking around the youth home looking for a location to photograph him, I had to wipe tears from my eyes," LaRoche said. "My son is four years old and I give him and he gives me so much love. Without him, my life would be empty. I cannot easily think of all the boys at this center, with no loving parents, without a home, with their hopes and dreams possibly out of their reach."

For more than two years Anthony has been in the foster care system, waiting for his forever family. Recently, he was matched with a family after his Heart Gallery photograph caught their eye on the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange Web site.

Another piece of The Michigan Heart Gallery is a small sampling of portraits of successful adoptive families. The Heart Gallery will feature up to 10 families who have opened their hearts and homes to children from the foster care system.

"These wonderful families show others that it is possible to build a family through special needs adoption," Udow said. "Despite the rough times that they might have faced along the way, they prove how much love and care can do for these children."

The Heart Gallery concept was initially founded by the New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department in 2001 as a way to help foster children in protective custody who are waiting for adoptive families find the families they desire. Stirring photographs, which reveal the children's spirits and individuality, have helped many of them find loving homes. The Heart Gallery has expanded to dozens of states and cities since 2001. Heart Galleries all over the United States have been featured in *People* magazine, the *New York Times* and on CNN, MSNBC and the Today Show.

For more information about The Michigan Heart Gallery and how you can get involved, please call (800) 589-6273 or visit The Michigan Heart Gallery Web site at www.miheart.org

###



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING



MARIANNE UDOW
DIRECTOR

News Release

Contact: Stepheni Schlinker or Maureen Sorbet (517) 373-7394

DHS Director Udow to lead program on racial disparity in child welfare *State's efforts are viewed as a national model for advancing change*

September 15, 2006

LANSING -- Department of Human Services Director Marianne Udow will speak about the overrepresentation of children and families of color in child welfare programs at the Casey Family Breakthrough Series Collaborative's third and final learning session in Detroit Sept. 19-20. She has served as executive sponsor since the start of the series in September 2005.

Michigan was selected from 13 states and jurisdictions because of its intensive efforts to address racial disparity in child welfare programs. In every state, African American and Native American children have historically made up a disproportionate percentage of the child welfare population when compared to their percentage of the general population.

"We are looking forward to Marianne Udow's participation in the upcoming learning session, and appreciate her leadership and commitment to addressing racial disproportionality in Michigan's child welfare system," said William Bell, president and CEO of Casey Family Programs, the nation's largest national operating foundation focused on foster care. "We are very excited about the child welfare practice improvement efforts all of the participating jurisdictions have been involved in during the past year."

The Casey Family Breakthrough Series Collaborative Learning Sessions invite participants from across the country wrestling with problems in child welfare to share and test experiences and expertise. The teams develop a systems improvement methodology that uses small test of change to identify and spread practice improvements throughout a child welfare agency. At this final session, the 13 teams from across the nation will share the results of their efforts and measure effective change.

In March, a Michigan task force on the overrepresentation of children of color in child welfare, co-chaired by Udow and Detroit-based Skillman Foundation CEO Carol Goss, released a report detailing recommendations intended to provide better outcomes for children of color served by the state's child welfare system. Michigan has already implemented several of the recommendations from the report.

Robert Hill, an author, national expert and researcher on child welfare disparities who consulted on the Michigan project, said Michigan's effort is unique among states.

"Michigan and its outstanding advisory committee should be strongly commended for its pioneering strides," Hill said. "This effort will serve as a model to spur similar initiatives to combat minority overrepresentation by states across the nation."

-MORE-

The Department of Human Services (DHS) is addressing many of these child welfare issues through a number of program improvements and initiatives already under way:

- DHS has already adopted a new approach to child welfare that focuses on involving families in decision-making, keeping children with birth families whenever safely possible, and when out-of-home placement is necessary to assure the safety of the child, increasing the number of placements with relatives.
- The department received a federal waiver that allows the use of Title IV-E funds to expand innovative prevention and family support programs.
- The department is already working with funding sources to determine where flexibility exists to support community-based initiatives.
- DHS is encouraging relative caregivers to become licensed foster parents to support the placement of children with relatives.

These initiatives are already showing results statewide. The overall foster care caseload dropped by two percent since 2004, and the percentage of out-of-home placements made with relatives has increased by over 10 percent since 2003.

Casey Family Programs, www.casey.org, is the largest national operating foundation whose sole mission is to provide and improve—and ultimately prevent the need for— foster care. The foundation draws on its 40 years of experience and expert research and analysis to improve the lives of children and youth in foster care in two important ways: by providing direct services and support to foster families; and promoting improvements in child welfare practice and policy.

For more information about the child welfare system in Michigan, go to www.michigan.gov/dhs

###